

order to implement the policies and procedures of the FAR. Such delegations shall be in writing, but need not be published.

(d) Unless prohibited by the FAR, the AGAR, or by other applicable statutes or regulations, each HCA may designate one individual from the contracting activity to carry out the functions of the HCA (HCAD). The HCAD may exercise all authority delegated to the HCA.

401.602 Contracting officers.

401.602-3 Ratification of unauthorized commitments.

(a) *Definitions. Ratification*, as used in this section, means the signed, documented action taken by an authorized official to approve and sanction a previously unauthorized commitment.

Unauthorized commitment, as used in this section, means an agreement made by a Government representative who lacked the authority to enter into a contract on behalf of the Government.

(b) *Policy*. The HCA may delegate ratification authority to the chief of the contracting office.

(c) *Procedure*. Whenever an official of the cognizant contracting activity who is authorized to ratify unauthorized commitments learns that a person or firm has assumed work as a result of an unauthorized commitment, that official shall take the following actions:

(1) Immediately inform any person who is performing work as a result of an unauthorized commitment that the work is being performed at that person's risk;

(2) Inform the individual who made the unauthorized commitment of the seriousness of the act and the possible consequences;

(3) Ensure that the individual who made the unauthorized commitment furnishes all records and documents concerning the commitment and a complete, written statement of facts, including, but not limited to: a statement as to why a contracting officer was not used; why the vendor was selected and a list of sources considered; a description of work to be performed or products to be furnished; the estimated or agreed price; whether an appropriation is available for the work;

and whether performance has begun. Under exceptional circumstances, such as when the individual who made the unauthorized commitment is no longer available to attest to the circumstances of the unauthorized commitment, the ratifying official may waive these requirements; and

(4) Decide whether ratification is proper and proceed as follows:

(i) If ratification is not justifiable, provide the cognizant program office, contracting office, and the unauthorized contractor with an explanation of the decision not to ratify.

(ii) If ratification appears adequately justified, ratify the action and retain or assign the contract to a successor contracting officer if necessary.

(iii) Maintain related approval, decisional, and background documents in the contract file for audit purposes.

(iv) Notify the cognizant program supervisor or line officer about the final disposition of the case; the notification may include a recommendation that the unauthorized commitment should be further considered a violation of USDA's employee conduct regulations.

401.603 Selection, appointment, and termination of appointment.

401.603-1 General.

An HCA may delegate contracting authority to the extent authorized by the SPE in a general delegation of acquisition authority, by appointing qualified individuals as contracting officers, in accordance with the USDA Contracting Officer Warrant System, Departmental Regulation 5001-1.

PART 402—DEFINITIONS OF WORDS AND TERMS

Sec.

402.000 Scope of part.

Subpart 402.1—Definitions

402.101 Definitions.

AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 301 and 40 U.S.C. 486(c).

SOURCE: 61 FR 53646, Oct. 15, 1996, unless otherwise noted.

402.000

402.000 Scope of part.

As used throughout this chapter, the following words and terms are used as defined in this subpart unless the context in which they are used clearly requires a different meaning, or a different definition is prescribed for a particular part or portion of a part.

Subpart 402.1—Definitions

402.101 Definitions.

Acquisition official means an individual who has been delegated authority to manage or to exercise acquisition functions and responsibilities.

Agency head or *Head of the Agency* means the Secretary of Agriculture, Deputy Secretary, or the Assistant Secretary for Administration.

Head of the contracting activity (HCA) means the official who has overall responsibility for managing the contracting activity (i.e., Chief, Forest Service; Administrator, Agricultural Research Service; etc.), or the individual designated by such an official to carry out the functions of the HCA.

Senior Procurement Executive (SPE) means the agency official appointed as such by the head of the agency pursuant to Executive Order 12931. The Director, Office of Procurement and Property Management, has been designated as the USDA SPE.

[61 FR 53646, Oct. 15, 1996, as amended at 63 FR 26994, May 15, 1998]

PART 403—IMPROPER BUSINESS PRACTICES AND PERSONAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Subpart 403.1—Safeguards

Sec.

- 403.101 Standards of conduct.
- 403.101-3 Agency regulations.
- 403.104 Procurement integrity.
- 403.104-5 [Reserved]
- 403.104-10 Violations or possible violations.

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Subpart 403.2—Contractor Gratuities to Government Personnel

- 403.203 Reporting suspected violations of the gratuities clause.
- 403.204 Treatment of violations.

Subpart 403.3—Reports of Suspected Antitrust Violations

- 403.303 Reporting suspected antitrust violations.

Subpart 403.4—Contingent Fees

- 403.409 Misrepresentations or violations of the Covenant Against Contingent Fees.

Subpart 403.5—Other Improper Business Practices

- 403.502 Subcontractor kickbacks.

Subpart 403.6—Contracts With Government Employees or Organizations Owned or Controlled by Them

- 403.602 Exceptions.
- 403.603 Responsibilities of the contracting officer.

Subpart 403.8—Limitation on the Payment of Funds to Influence Federal Transactions

- 403.806 Processing suspected violations

AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 301 and 40 U.S.C. 486(c).

SOURCE: 61 FR 53646, Oct. 15, 1996, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart 403.1—Safeguards

403.101 Standards of conduct.

403.101-3 Agency regulations.

(a) The standards of conduct for USDA procurement officials are the uniform standards established by the Office of Government Ethics in 5 CFR Part 2635, *Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch*, and FAR 3.104, *Procurement integrity*.

(b) Procurement officials and other employees who require advice concerning the application of standards of conduct to any acquisition issue shall obtain ethics advisory opinions from